

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 HA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/118 W

-----085756 061716Z /53

R 061631Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4820
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 06353

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, AG, SS, SP
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HAYNES' MEETING WITH SPANISH MFA
OFFICIAL: THE SAHARA DISPUTE

1. SUMMARY: DURING HIS CONSULTATIONS HERE JUNE 3, AMBASSADOR HAYNES MET WITH MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AFRICA AND CONTINENTAL ASIA LOPEZ AGUIRREBENGOA, WHO HAS SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME BOTH IN NORTH AFRICA AND IN THE BUREAU HE NOW HEADS. DURING THE MEETING LOPEZ REVEALED THAT SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA MANUECO WOULD NOT RETURN TO ALGIERS (EXCEPT TO SAY HIS GOODBYES), AND THAT HIS REPLACEMENT DEPENDED ON HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPED. LOPEZ SAID HE TOO HAD HEARD REPORTS LIBYA WAS PROMOTING A SAHARA SETTLEMENT, AND HE NOT ONLY BELIEVED THEM BUT CONSIDERED LIBYA, BECAUSE OF ITS PAN-ARAB APPROACH AND FINANCIAL STRENGTH, A POSSIBLE KEY TO AN EVENTUAL SOLUTION. LOPEZ SAW MAURITANIA AS MORE
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ANXIOUS THAN MOROCCO FOR A SOLUTION (AND SAID THERE WERE GIRM-POLISARIO CONTACTS), DEFLECTED ANY IDEA THAT SPAIN HAD A DIRECT ROLE TO PLAY, AND CONSIDERED ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN MUTUAL ANTAGONISM TOO DEEP-SEATED TO PERMIT ANY EARLY RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THEM.
END SUMMARY.

2. TO AMBASSADOR HAYNES' INQUIRY AFTER HIS SPANISH COLLEAGUE, LOPEZ SAID MANUECO WOULD BE GOING BACK TO ALGIERS ONLY TO SAY HIS GOODBYES. THE GOS HAD HOPED AND STILL HOPED TO SEND A REPLACEMENT, SAID LOPEZ, BUT THAT WOULD DEPEND ON HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPED.

3. LOPEZ SAID HE TOO HAD HEARD REPORTS THAT LIBYA WAS ACTIVE WITH REGARD TO THE SAHARA DISPUTE, AND WHILE HE HAD NO CONCRETE CONFIRMATION THIS WAS THE CASE, THIS IMPRESSION HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED CONSIDERABLY DURING HIS EARLY APRIL VISIT TO MAURITANIA. FURTHER EVIDENCE, SAID LOPEZ, WAS THE FACT THAT MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT MOKTAR OULD DADDAH HAD NOT ONLY GONE ON A STATE VISIT TO LIBYA, BUT THAT IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, LIBYA HAD COMMITTED A BILLION DOLLARS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRON ORE RESERVES IN THE MAURITANIAN PORTION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA. THIS WAS A CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AS WELL AS FINANCIAL COMMITMENT, LOPEZ SAID.

4. IN TERMS OF HELPING TO BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO THE SAHARA PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO LOPEZ, LIBYA WAS PROBABLY IN THE BEST POSITION (AFTER THE US, THE USSR, AND FRANCE, WHICH WERE NOT INTERESTED IN ENGAGING IN SUCH AN EFFORT). IN CONTRAST TO ALGERIA'S NARROWLY NATIONALISTIC APPROACH, LIBYA TOOK A PAN-ARAB VIEW, AND THIS COMBINED WITH ITS FINANCIAL POWER TO MAKE IT A CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLE KEY TO AN EVENTUAL SOLUTION.

5. WHILE MOROCCAN OFFICIALS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE SPANISH REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT A SAHARA PROBLEM EVEN EXISTED, MUCH LESS THAT A SOLUTION FOR IT SHOULD BE SOUGHT, SAID LOPEZ, MAURITANIA IS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH ITS ALMOST COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON MOROCCO AND VERY MUCH WANTS A SOLUTION. MAURITANIA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY INVOLVED IN A REAL CIVIL WAR WITH ONE BROTHER IN THE POLISARIO FIGHTING AGAINST ANOTHER IN THE GIRM. ETHNICALLY, THE POLISARIO AND THE MAURITANIANS ARE THE SAME PEOPLE, LOPEZ SAID. THE GIRM IS IN TOUCH WITH THE POLISARIO AND TALKS BETWEEN THEM ARE GOING ON ABOUT A POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT, ACCORDING TO LOPEZ.

6. DEFLECTING INQUIRIES ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPANISH ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT A SOLUTION, LOPEZ REITERATED GOS POLICY IN DECLARING SPAIN HAD NO DIRECT ROLE, BUT WAS OF COURSE PREPARED AS A BENIGN NEIGHBOR TO HELP OUT AS APPROPRIATE ONCE THE INTERESTED PARTIES WERE GENUINELY READY FOR A SOLUTION. LOPEZ THOUGHT THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TINDOUF CAMPS (WHICH HE ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 130,000) SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN ANY SELF-DETERMINATION EXERCISE (DESPITE THEIR MIXED ORIGINS), AND HE SAW AUTONOMOUS FEDERATION OF MAURITANIA'S PART OF THE SAHARA WITHIN MAURITANIA AS THE CORE OF ANY EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT. LOPEZ THOUGHT MOROCCO MIGHT EVEN BE WILLING TO SEE THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE TWO PORTIONS MOVE NORTH 50-100 KILOMETERS AS A PEACE-MAKING GESTURE WHICH WOULD STILL PRESERVE MOROCCO'S PRINCIPAL INTERESTS IN SECURITY AND PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS. HE SAW THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO AS

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TOO DEEP-SEATED, HOWEVER, TO MAKE POSSIBLE ANY EARLY RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THEM.

7.COMMENT: WE FOUND AMBASSADOR HAYNES' BRIEF VISIT VERY YRODUCTTVE AND BELIEVE THAT FURTHER CONTACTS BETEEN US AND EMBASSIES ALGIERS, RABAT, NOUAKCHOTT AND PARIS REGARDING NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS WOULD BE USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE. EATON

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